

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tail Docking Policy Changed

The Wyoming State Fair Advisory Committee has modified the tail docking policy. The changes will go into effect immediately for the 2007 Wyoming State Fair, August 11 through 18 in Douglas.

The modified policy states: "Every market lamb that shows at the Wyoming State Fair must have a minimum of three (3) full coccygeal/caudal vertebrae. The top six market lambs (Champion and Reserve Champion black-face, speckle-face, and white face lambs) will be x-rayed. Awards will be withheld for the animals until the results of the x-rays are received. Lambs that do not conform will be disqualified. (No other lambs will move into those places.)"

Although no documentation will be required at the Wyoming State Fair, it is recommended that contestants have lambs checked by a licensed veterinarian who will attest that there is a minimum of three (3) coccygeal/caudal vertebrae in place.

Tail docking originally began centuries ago as a health and cleanliness issue. Extreme docking, on the other hand, has evolved in the shows rings only for the purpose of aesthetic value. While show ring judges have favored this trend, the U.S. Animal Health Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, the American Sheep Industry Association and the American Farm Bureau Association have all developed resolutions urging that sheep be long docked for the welfare of the animals.

Scientific studies show that the incidence of rectal prolapse is much lower if a dock is a long dock. This incidence increases dramatically if the tail has a short dock. The Wyoming State Fair is very concerned with the welfare of the animals as well as using accepted animal husbandry practices.

Questions may be directed to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at (307) 777-7180 or the Wyoming State Fair at (307) 358-2398.

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